



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,644	03/09/2004	Glenn A. Roberson JR.	AXIG-00101	4205
28960	7590	05/10/2005	EXAMINER	
HAVERSTOCK & OWENS LLP 162 NORTH WOLFE ROAD SUNNYVALE, CA 94086			KRAMER, DEAN J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

3652

DATE MAILED: 05/10/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/797,644

Applicant(s)

ROBERSON ET AL.

Examiner

Dean J. Kramer

Art Unit

3652

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 11-14, 16-27 and 30-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 9, 10, 15, 28 and 29 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claims 11, 30, and 35-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The exact meaning of the phrase "a substantially middle section", as recited in claims 11 and 30, is not clearly understood.

Also, the preambles of claims 35-38 are not consistent with the preamble of claim 20 from which they ultimately depend.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-8, 16, 20-27, and 35, as understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by O'Rourke (U.S. Pat. # 6,416,097).

O'Rourke shows a sifting device comprising a detachable scoop head (12), a detachable DC motor assembly (24), a detachable handle (14) coupled to the motor via a coupling (14'), and a power pack (30', 30", 26) located in the proximal end of the handle thereby inherently creating a "counterweight" relative to the scoop head (12) when the device is supported at coupling (14').

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 12-15, 17-19, 31-34, and 36-38, as understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Rourke ('097) in view O'Rourke (U.S. Pat. # 6,022,058).

The O'Rourke ('058) patent shows a sifting tool substantially similar to the O'Rourke ('097) tool presented above in section 3, but the ('058) scoop head contains slotted openings (16', 18', 19') on all of its wall members. The O'Rourke ('058) scoop head also has an extended portion (25) directed upwardly and outwardly from the bottom wall (16) at "about" a fifteen degree angle.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide parallel slots in two side walls and back wall (18) of the O'Rourke ('097) scoop head as taught by the O'Rourke ('058) patent in order to more efficiently sift small items, such as bedding, therefrom. It also would have been obvious to slightly angle a distal portion from the bottom wall upwardly and outwardly, similar to that shown in Figure 3 of the ('058) patent, so that the waste material collected would be less likely to fall from the front open end of the head. It is noted that while the O'Rourke ('058) patent broadly discloses that the angle of inclination of its extended portion (25) is "about" fifteen degrees relative to the bottom wall (16), it would have been obvious to extend the distal portion of the modified ('097) scoop at any small acute angle that could be considered "about" fifteen degrees (e.g. twenty degrees) so long as the scoop could effectively slide under the waste to be collected while retaining the same as the material is being sifted. Regarding claims 17-19 and 36-38, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to form the resulting scoop head out of metal or any other rigid and durable material especially since applicant has not specifically disclosed that this particular material solves any stated problem or is for any critical purpose, and it appears that the device would perform equally well with its scoop head made of any relatively lightweight, sturdy material that would be easy to clean and maintain.

Allowable Subject Matter

7. Claims 9, 10, 15, 28, and 29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

8. Claims 11, 30, and 34 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Drawings

9. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "plurality of wires" (claims 5, 6, 24, and 25) and the "release mechanism" (claims 9 and 28) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

10. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: "200". Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

11. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

On page 8, line 6, reference character "210" (first occurrence) should be changed to -215—in order to accurately correspond to the drawings.

The paragraph on page 10, lines 13-15 appears to be describing an embodiment not shown in the drawings.

Appropriate correction is required.

Conclusion


12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Stinnett et al. shows a manure fork with an auxiliary means of removing bedding therefrom.

Art Unit: 3652

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dean J. Kramer whose telephone number is (571) 272-6926. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. (7:00-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eileen Lillis can be reached on (571) 272-6928. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Dean J. Kramer
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3652

djk
5/3/05